The South Eastern Railway Company extended the line from Shortlands to Southborough Road (now known as Bickley). Between Beckenham and Shortlands it was only a single line. About this time the Volunteer Movement was making headway, and the first Volunteer review was held at Bickley Park. This taxed the resources of the railways. George Hannan, afterwards Station Master at New Beckenham, was appointed Pilotman for the single line. He wore a red coat and no train was allowed to go without him personally giving permission to the driver. Many trains were worked by the Great Western Railway Company from Kensington etc. and the Brighton Company from Pimlico, and all was successfully carried out.

While the foregoing was taking place another company, then known as the East Kent Company, had made a line from Strood South Eastern Railway to Faversham; this was extended both ways, down to Dover and up to Bickley, and by using the West London and Crystal Palace Railway, got access to the Brighton Company's line to Pimlico and became the London Chatham and Dover Railway. Later on they made the line through Penge Tunnel (1863) from Beckenham to Herne Hill, the bricks for which were made from the clay got out, on the ground now known as Crampton Road, a Mr. Crampton was one of the Directors, thus the name. The tunnel is 2,200 yards long.

Like all the early railways they had their ups and downs, and it is about one of the latter I must tell, Mr. Mathew continued. In the early part of January 1866 there was a very heavy fall of snow which broke down all the telegraph wires, so the only knowledge beyond the clock, when a train was coming, was by seeing it! A thaw followed and on Sunday morning 10th January 1866 at 2.10 a.m. Mr.W.Baxter, signalman at the Beckenham Junction box, saw the head light of the down goods for Ramsgate pass Penge junction, and he lowered the signal.

Then when the train was crossing over the double bridge, over the stream and the occupation way (now Blakeney Road), he saw the light disappear, and heard the crash. The bridge collapsed, the foundations having been washed away by the rush of water in the swollen stream. The engine 'The Tacita' parted from the tender and fell on its side in the meadow; the driver was thrown clear and found himself sitting under the hedge facing Penge, unhurt. His fireman fell partly under the tender on which many trucks were piled up, he being killed outright. It was not until the following Thursday that his body was got out. The contents of many trucks, being 'general goods', went floating down the stream. (See woodcut on page 53).

Now I must go back a little, Mr. Mathews continued. On the Mid-Kent line, the branch from New Beckenham to Addiscombe Road, with stations at Clock House and Elmers End, was opened in April 1864.

Then as regards the mode of working; several different ways had been adopted, and one of the conditions imposed by the Cator Estate was that no train should stop at Beckenham on Sundays during Divine Service. (See page 33)

About 1866 or 1867 the S.E.R. Co. discontinued running between Beckenham Junction and Bickley. Six coaches off every Mid-Kent train were attached to the down London Chatham and Dover trains for Bromley and Bickley passengers (very few travelled to and from London by the L.C. & D. route in those days) and in like manner these coaches returned by the up trains. Then passengers for the Addiscombe Road branch had to change at New Beckenham. After that the down trains were divided at New Beckenham, the front portion going to Addiscombe, and to save time on the up journey, the 'Junction' portion was propelled out, and attached to the Addiscombe portion which had to run into New Beckenham first. I believe (he wrote) this was the only place in the Country where trains with passengers in them, were regularly worked between two stations with the engine in the rear. It was said 'they push and shove us about as they like between Beckenham Junction and New Beckenham'.

The signal box at Beckenham Junction was the second box in the United Kingdom to be fitted with new Saxby and Farmer's interlocking apparatus, and at the time was looked upon somewhat as a marvel. There were 36 levers and the points had to be set right before the signal lever could be pulled over, but even this was found not enough to guard against accidents, so ten minutes before the morning and evening down Boat Trains were due, the signalman had to put a bolt through the tongue facing the points and screw on a nut. The Stationmaster, Mr.M.Moore, had to see it done and wait until the train passed. "Now, what with locking bars and other devices, safety is as far as possible insured," Mr. Mathew concluded.

RAILWAY NOTICES

WEST OF LONDON & CRYSTAL PALACE RAILWAY

In consequence of the restrictions placed upon the Traffic on this line, and the Mid-Kent Lines on Sundays, by Mr. Cator, of Beckenham, the Mid-Kent Trains marked in the Company's Time Bills for the present month, as stopping on SUNDAYS (in connection with Trains on the West End of London and Crystal Palace Railway) at BECKENHAM, at the hours of 1.56 DOWN, and 2.30 and 4.30 UP, and at LOWER SYDENHAM at the hours of 1.53 DOWN, and 2.34 and 4.34 UP, will NOT stop as advertised.

EDWARD BELLAMY
Secretary

August 5th, 1858

27, Great George Street,
Westminster.

- - - -

SUNDAY TRAFFIC CLAUSE

A Rent Charge of £2,000 a year payable on each Christmas Eve, but if during the whole of any year ending on Christmas Day the terms as to SUNDAY TRAFFIC are in every respect complied with, then such compliance shall be accepted in lieu of the payment for that year of the Rent Charge.

- - - -

(Cator Estate clause inserted in all Railway Bills to prevent Sunday travelling.)

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLS

BROMLEY ROAD SCHOOL. The first Village school, that in Bromley Road, was built in the reign of George III in a field adjoining the Parish Church on a site given by the Lord of the Manor John B. Cator. In 1818 a movement was started for the education of the children of the poor, on Church lines and at a Vestry Meeting on 9th. March 1818 it was decided to form a Society in the Parish and to invite subscriptions towards the cost of building two classrooms, with a house for the master and mistress. Among the Benefactors were John Cator (Beckenham Place), Lord Gwydir (Langley) and Lord Auckland (Eden Park).

The National School, opened in October 1818, was built by the National Society for the Education of the Poor, primarily for children whose parents worked on local estates. Rev. Andrew Brandram, later Rector, was the first Secretary, George Grote, of Shortlands, father of the famous historian, the first Treasurer, and Thomas Pritchett and his eldest daughter were the first master and mistress. The school started with 36 boys and 36 girls.

In 1856 the buildings and site were formally vested by the Cator family in the Rector, Churchwardens and an Overseer, and the following year the first extension was made. In 1858 another gift of land was made by John Cator for the enlargment of the school. In 1875 the school was leased to the Beckenham School Board and in 1905 the site was sold by the Trustees to the Beckenham Urban District Council. The year following the second extension was made, since when there have been no major structural extensions. It is at present an Infants School for both boys and girls.

CHURCHFIELDS SCHOOL. Reference is made on page 13 to the acquisition of land in Churchfields Road by the Beckenham School Board in 1889 for the erection of a school first known as the Arthur Road School and later as Churchfields School, and in 1907 a further piece of land was bought by the School Board for an extension. The school is now a Primary School for both boys and girls.

THE HALL in Bromley Road, near the junction with Oakwood Avenue, was probably built by the Cator family, but very little is known of its early history. It was the residence of Peter Cator, the seventh son of Joseph Cator, who played a prominent part in the development of the Cator Estate. He died there on 1st May 1873 at the age of 77, and Charles Cator was living there in 1878. THE HALL SCHOOL was started there about 1893 under the Principalship of Mrs. Lowe.

In 1898 a girls school called St. CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL, was opened in Parth Road, off Oakwood Avenue, moving later to Rectory Road and then to The Avenue. In 1926 St. Christopher's moved to The Hall when the school was formed into a Public School, an Educational Trust under a Board of Governors.

MINSHULL HOUSE, a private school for girls, was founded in 1868 in Park Road by the Misses Worthington and was later taken over by the Misses Burton. For 97 years this school served both the Village and the Borough until demolished in 1965 for the erection of Minshull Court.

KEPPLESTONE SCHOOL, for the Daughters of Gentlemen, was started at the former mansion in Kelsey Park, for boarders, with the day scholars at 'Whitmorss', now 'Beau Lodge' in Kelsey Lane. The exact dates of starting are uncertain but the school was at Kelsey Park in 1901, but not in 1909 having moved to Overbury Avenue.

BOYS COUNTY SCHOOL. When Beckenham became a School District under the Education Act of 1875 and Primary Schools were soon after formed, the Board had no power to spend public money on Secondary Education, but after the Local Government Act of 1888 the Beckenham Technical Institute was built in Beckenham Road, next to the Baths, on the site of the old Clock House. The foundation stones were laid on 25th July 1899 and the opening ceremony performed on 4th June 1901. There was a staff of only two, at first; the Headmaster Mr. C. T. F. Watts with Mr. Henry Morris, who remained with the school until 1933.

In the spring of 1931 the school moved to High Street, Penge, on the corner of Kent House Road and became the Beckenham and Penge Boys Grammar School. The next move was in 1968 when the school went to Eden Park and was renamed the LANGLEY PARK SCHOOL FOR BOYS.

GIRLS COUNTY SCHOOL. In September 1919 a school was built in Lennard Road for girls, and the first Headmistress was Miss. E. M. Fox who held that appointment for 25 years. That school was extended in 1927 but moved to Eden Park in January 1959 and is now known as the LANGLEY PARK SCHOOL FOR GIRLS. The new school badge incorporates the Arms of the Style family who lived at Langley in the 16th. century.

BALGOWAN SCHOOL, a Primary School for girls and boys was built in 1915, and during the first World War was used as a Military Hospital, staffed by the local Red Cross.

THE ABBEY SCHOOL, formed in 1866 as a private school for boys, was founded by Rev. Thomas Lloyd Phillips, Curate at the Parish Church under Rev. F.C.S. Chalmers, the Rector. He began to hold classes in a room over Levens' Bakery Shop in the High Street and soon moved to a house in Southend Road, near the corner of Foxgrove Road and finally conceived the idea of taking over the gravel pit opposite, then part of Copers Cope Farm, and of building himself a school. He was his own architect, and gradually added to the building as numbers demanded and funds became available.

The school continued to function there until World War II when the school was evacuated to East Grinstead in 1940, where it remained until it closed down in 1969. The building, which was badly damaged by a fire during the last war (not due to enemy action), was later acquired by the South Eastern Gas Board until sold for development and the erection of some nine houses and 126 flats, now known as the Abbey Park estate.

CLARE HOUSE was another private school for boys, opened in Oakwood Avenue in 1896 for boys between the ages of 5 and 14, as preparation for entrance to Public Schools. In 1940 the school joined with The Abbey to form the Abbey and Clare House Company, and the Oakwood Avenue school closed down at the end of the summer term of 1970.

CRAVEN COLLEGE was a high class private school for boys, at Elmer Lodge, Elmers End. The dates are rather vague but the school was certainly still active there at the turn of the century. There was an excellent polo ground at the rear, known as the Eden Park Polo Club.

Education played an important part on the local Council's programme and at least two members of the former Beckenham Education Committee have been remembered in local schools. MARIAN VIAN, in Shirley Crescent, Elmers End, a Primary and Secondary School for girls was named after Miss Marian Vian, who lived in The Knoll, Beckenham; and STEWART FLEMING, in Witham Road, on the Anerley border, a Primary school for boys and girls, was named after Rev. R. Stewart Fleming, for many years minister of the Elm Road Baptist Church, Beckenham.

THE GROWTH OF CHURCHES IN BECKENHAM

Just over one hundred years ago when, in 1861, the population of Beckenham was only 2390, there was only one church in the Village, the Parish Church of St. George. The development of this church is dealt with in detail under a separate heading on page 5.

With the development of the Cator Estate St.Paul's Church, New Beckenham was built, first as a daughter church of St. George's, and on 10th July 1864 the first portion of the church, consisting of the Nave and North Porch, was opened. In 1872 a separate Parish was created when the main church was consecrated.

The next church to be built, at the other end of the Village, was St.Mary's, Shortlands. The foundation stone was laid on 5th. October 1867 and the church opened on 5th July 1868. In 1870 Shortlands was formed into an ecclesiastical district, out of the mother church and the first part of the church was consecrated on 21st December of that year. The original church was erected by the family of the late W. A. Wilkinson and the living was the gift of Miss E.M. Wilkinson. On 8th July 1888 the enlarged building was consecrated, together with the organ. The church and lych gate were entirely destroyed during World War II and the present church built in 1956.

By 1871 the population of Beckenham had risen to 6090 when the need for more churches became urgent. The history of Christ Church, Beckenham, began in 1873 when a temporary iron church was built in The Avenue to relieve pressure of accommodation offered by the Parish Church. The foundation stones for the church in Fairfield Road were laid on 3rd April 1875 by the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the church consecrated on 20th May 1876 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Hooker (of Harris and Hooker, Builders) being the first People's Warden.

In 1930 a Carillon of hand-operated bells was given in memory of Rev.Dr.Harrington Lees, a former Vicar of Christ Church and later Archbishop of Melbourne, Australia. The church was severely damaged by a flying bomb and after rebuilding was re-hallowed in 1950.

The Old Beckenham Mission in Bromley Road, built in 1876, was founded by B.A. Heywood of 'Banner', Westgate Road, and by Capt.P.W. Stephens. John Hooker, Churchwarden at Christ Church, was associated with the Mission, and when he died on 29th September 1878 Mr. George Gatton was appointed Missioner. In 1937 the building was converted into flats and named 'Oakhill Court'.

In 1877 the first Congregational services in Beckenham were started by a group of people in an iron room at New Beckenham Station. A Lecture Hall was built in Oakhill Road and opened on 30th July 1878.

In 1878 two more churches were built; Holy Trinity, Lennard Road and St. Barnabas in Oakhill Road, the latter having been a separate parish since 1877. The building of this church was done by stages, the whole being completed in 1933. Like many other churches the building was badly damaged by bombs in 1944, but was restored in 1948. St. Peter's Church Hall, in Malmains Way, was built in 1954 to serve that part of the parish, and has since been extended.

St. James's Church, Elmers End, was built in 1879, first as a Chapel of Ease to the Parish Church, but a separate parish was created in 1924. The original church was enlarged and dedicated on 29th. April 1936.

With the continued growth in population, which by 1881 had risen to 13,011, the Nonconformist Churches began to be established. First, the Baptist Church in Elm Road, where the foundation stones were laid in November 1882 and the church formally opened in 1883: and two years later the Congregational Mission Chapel in Langley Road, Elmers End.

Robert Borrowman in his book says:- "There was in 1884 considerable activity on the part of Nonconformists in Beckenham, for at that time the Wesleyan body first started their services by meeting in the Public Hall, and on 3rd September, the memorial stones of a Congregational Mission Chapel in Langley Road were laid, and the Chapel itself opened on December 11th." It was on 16th. March 1887 that the four memorial stones of the Wesleyan Chapel were laid, and the building opened on 28th. September of the same year.

Also in 1877 building work started on the Congregational Church in Crescent Road, but the church was not opened until 20th. June 1888. The St. Augustine's Mission Hall in Churchfields Road was opened in 1886, and in 1910 a dual purpose Hall and Church was started, the present church being consecrated on 31st. May 1945.

By 1891 the population of Beckenham had further increased to 20,707 when the first Roman Catholic Church was built in Overbury Avenue (now demolished). Two years later the Arthur Road Mission in Churchfields Road was opened; and by 1901 the population was recorded as 26,331.

The church of St. Michael and All Angels in Birkbeck Road began in 1899 but was not opened until 1906. After being destroyed by fire during the last war, a new church was built, facing Ravenscroft Road, and was consecrated on 7th. October 1956.

In 1907 two small churches were opened at Clock House. All Saints, which stood on the junction of Clock House Bridge and Chaffinch Road, was a Mission Church of St. Augustine's and was removed when St. Augustine's was created a separate parish.

The other was the Wesleyan Chapel in Clock House Road. Five years later the Congregational Church in High Street, Penge was built.

Reference has been made to the rapid increase in population as shown by the decadel records, the 1911 census showing 31,692; but by 1921 the total was only 33,345 which covered the period of the first World War. The figure for 1931, however, had risen again to 43,832.

After the first World War the Congregational Free Church, in Goddard Road, was built in 1931, and two years later St. John's at Eden Park.

In 1907 the Christ Church Mission Room had been established in Croydon Road, between the Cottage Hospital and Shaftesbury Road, and it was the worshippers at that Mission who formed the nucleus of the congregation for the new church at Eden Park. The iron hut of the Mission was transported to Eden Park Avenue and was used for worship until the present church was built, and consecrated in 1936.

The Catholic Convent of Handmaids of the Sacred Heart was founded in Foxgrove Road in 1930, and a new chapel opened in September 1936. St. Edmund's Catholic Church in Village Way was formed in 1933 and the present church dedicated in 1938.

So, from the one church in 1863, after 70 years there were over 20 churches in the Beckenham area, and a population increase of 47,000 over the same period.

THE GROWTH OF CHURCHES in the BECKENHAM AREA

1100 The Parish Churches of St.GEORGE, at Beckenham, and St.JOHN THE BAPTIST, at West Wickham, date back to 1100, or even earlier.

1568 West Wickham Parish Church re-built.

1864 St.Paul's Church, New Beckenham. (Consecrated 1872)

1868 St.Mary's Parish Church, Shortlands. (Enlarged 1888)

1876 Christ Church, Fairfield Road, Beckenham.

1878 St. Barnabas Church, Oakhill Road, Beckenham.

Holy Trinity Church, Lennard Road, Beckenham.

1879 St. James's Church, Elmers End. (Enlarged 1924)

1882 Baptist Church, Elm Road, Beckenham.

1884 Congregational Mission Chapel, Langley Road, Elmers End.

1886 Beckenham Parish Church re-built. (Completed 1902)

St.Augustine's Mission Hall, Churchfields Road, Beckenham.

1887 Wesleyan (Methodist) Church, Bromley Road, Beckenham.

Congregational Church, Crescent Road, Beckenham.

1892 Roman Catholic Church, Overbury Avenue, Beckenham.

1893 Arthur Road Mission, (Churchfields Road) Beckenham.

1906 St. Michael's Church, Birkbeck Road, Beckenham.

1907 All Saints' Church, Clock House.

Wesleyan (Methodist) Chapel, Clock House.

1912 Congregational Church, High Street, Penge.

1931 Elmers End Free Church, Goddard Road.

1933 St. John's Church, Eden Park.

St.Edmund's Roman Catholic Church, Village Way, Beckenham.

THE COAT OF ARMS
OF
THE FORMER BOROUGH OF BECKENHAM

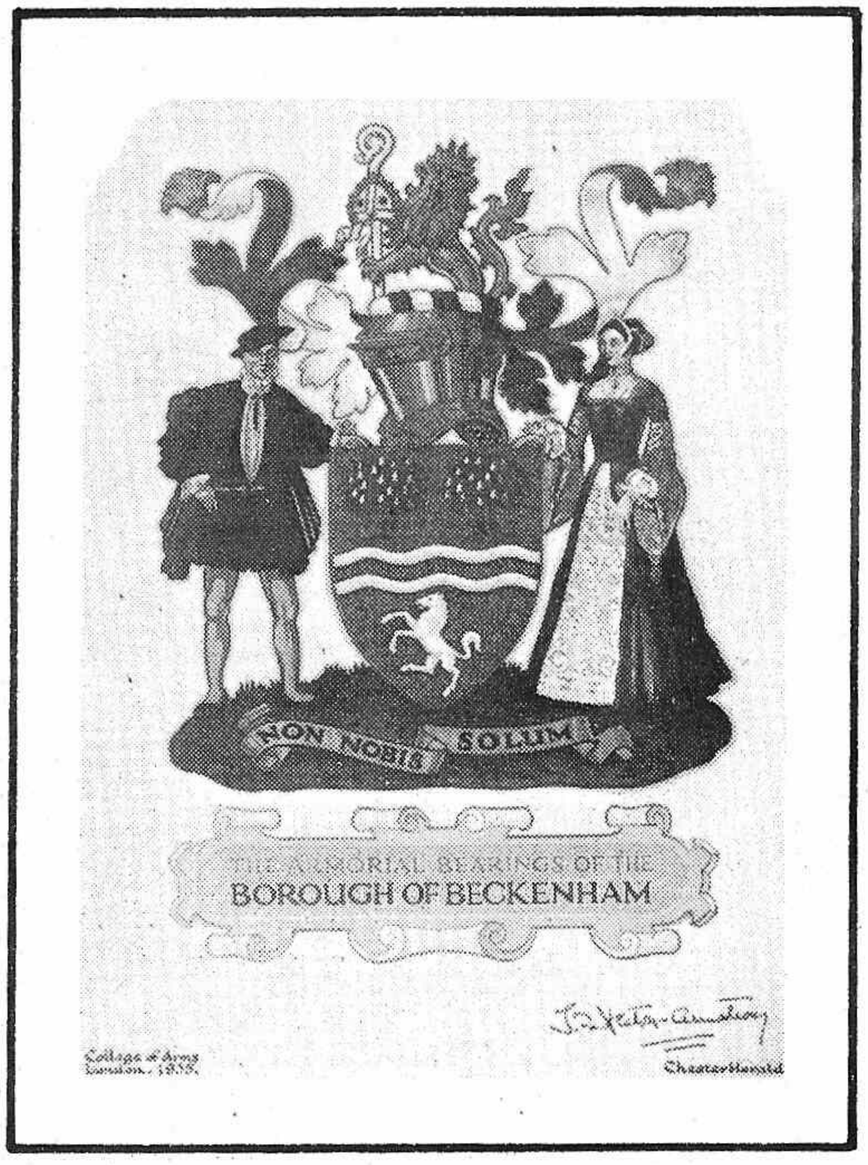
THE SHIELD had a green background, suggestive of the Beckenham of old - a township with a rural setting. The Chestnut Trees in bloom, said to be unique in Civic Heraldry, are in keeping with this idea and are indicative of the beauty of the flowering shrubs and trees in many parts of the town during spring and summer, and of the parks and well-wooded gardens. The Wavy Lines are the heraldic symbol of the Rivers Beck and Chaffinch flowing through the town. Below is the White Horse of Kent, linking Beckenham with one of the most famous counties of England.

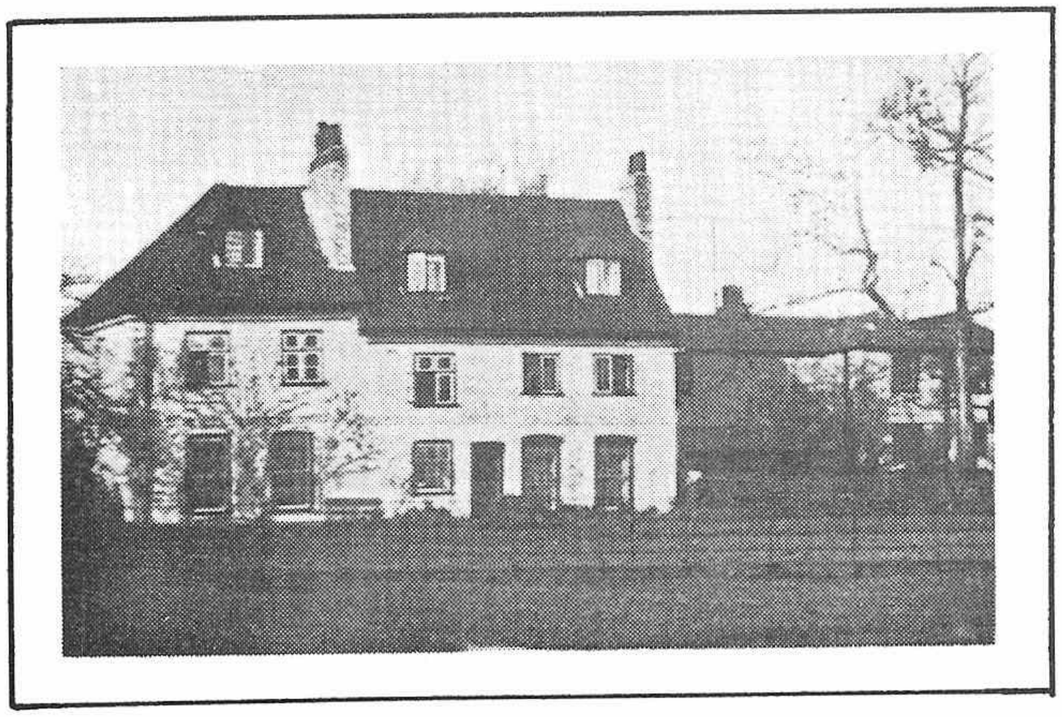
For THE CREST reference has been made to the ancient and modern ownership of large areas of Beckenham. The Lion is the lion of the Cator family, and the ecclesiastical symbols in its grasp are representative of Bishop Odo, of Bayeux. (see page 8)

THE SUPPORTERS are indicative of the features in the history of Beckenham (which included the major part of West Wickham), namely its Tudor associations.

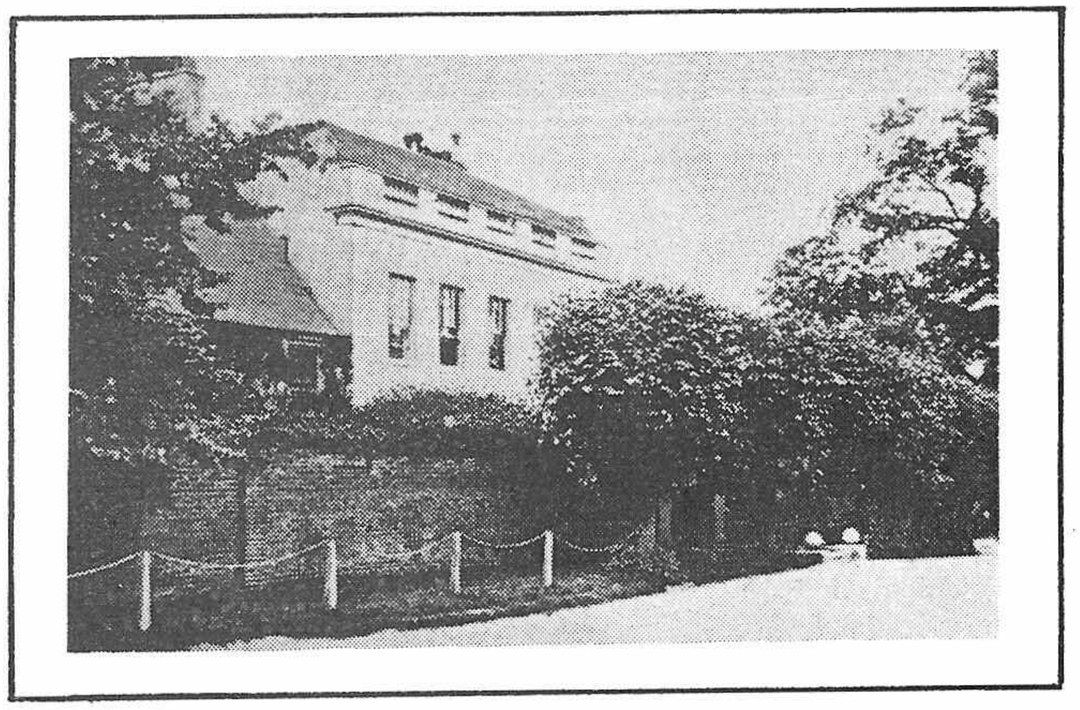
The Urban District Council obtained the Grant of Arms (Shield and Crest) in 1931. On the Charter taking effect the Supporters were added to complete the Arms granted to the Borough.

THE MOTTO - "Non Nobis Solum" - is interpreted "Not for Ourselves alone".

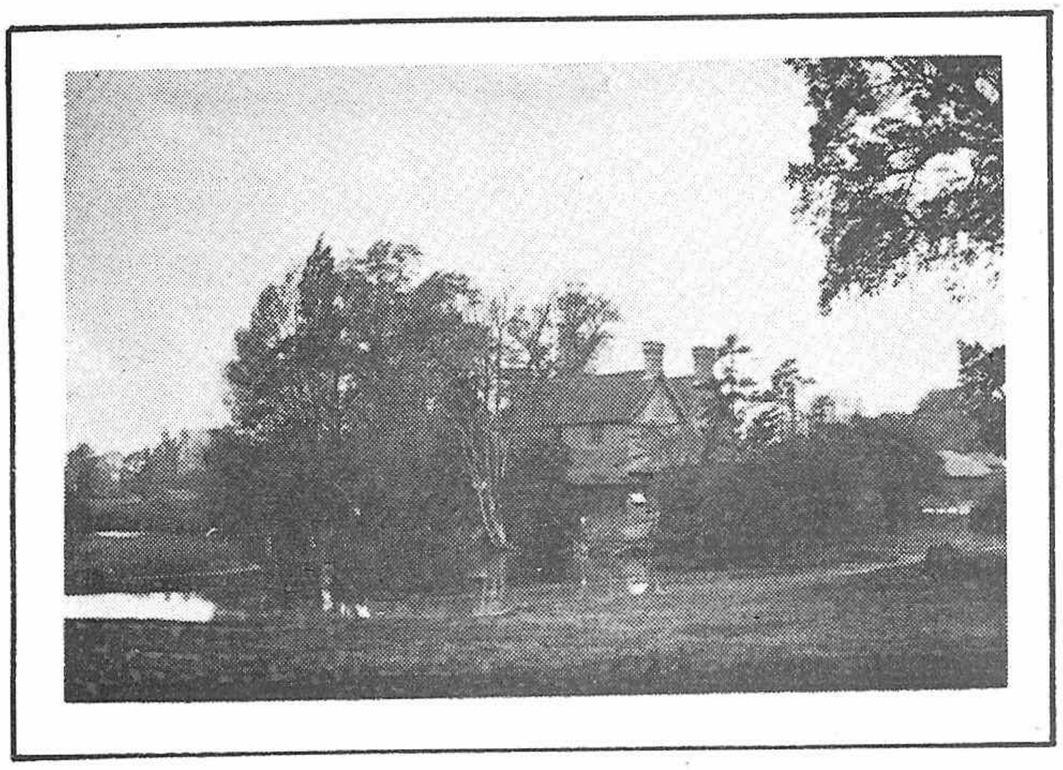

NON NOBIS SOLUM
THE ARMORIAL BEARINGS OF THE
BOROUGH OF BECKENHAM
College of Arms
London 1955
Chester Herald



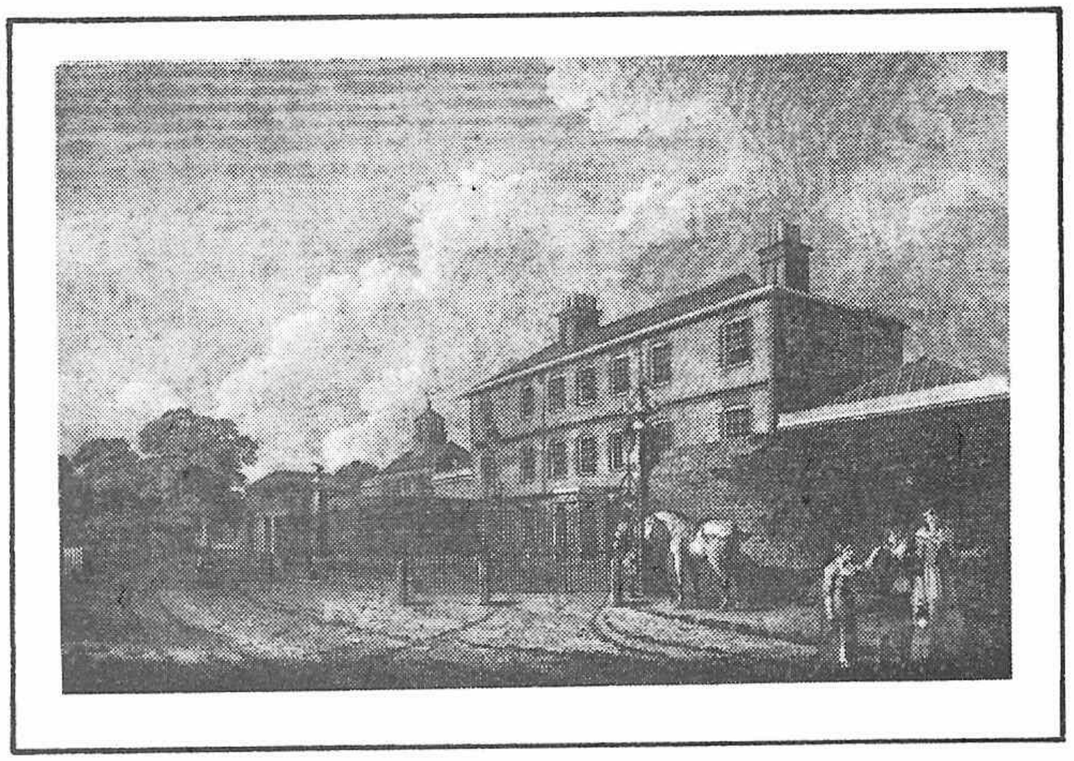
Kent House, 1909



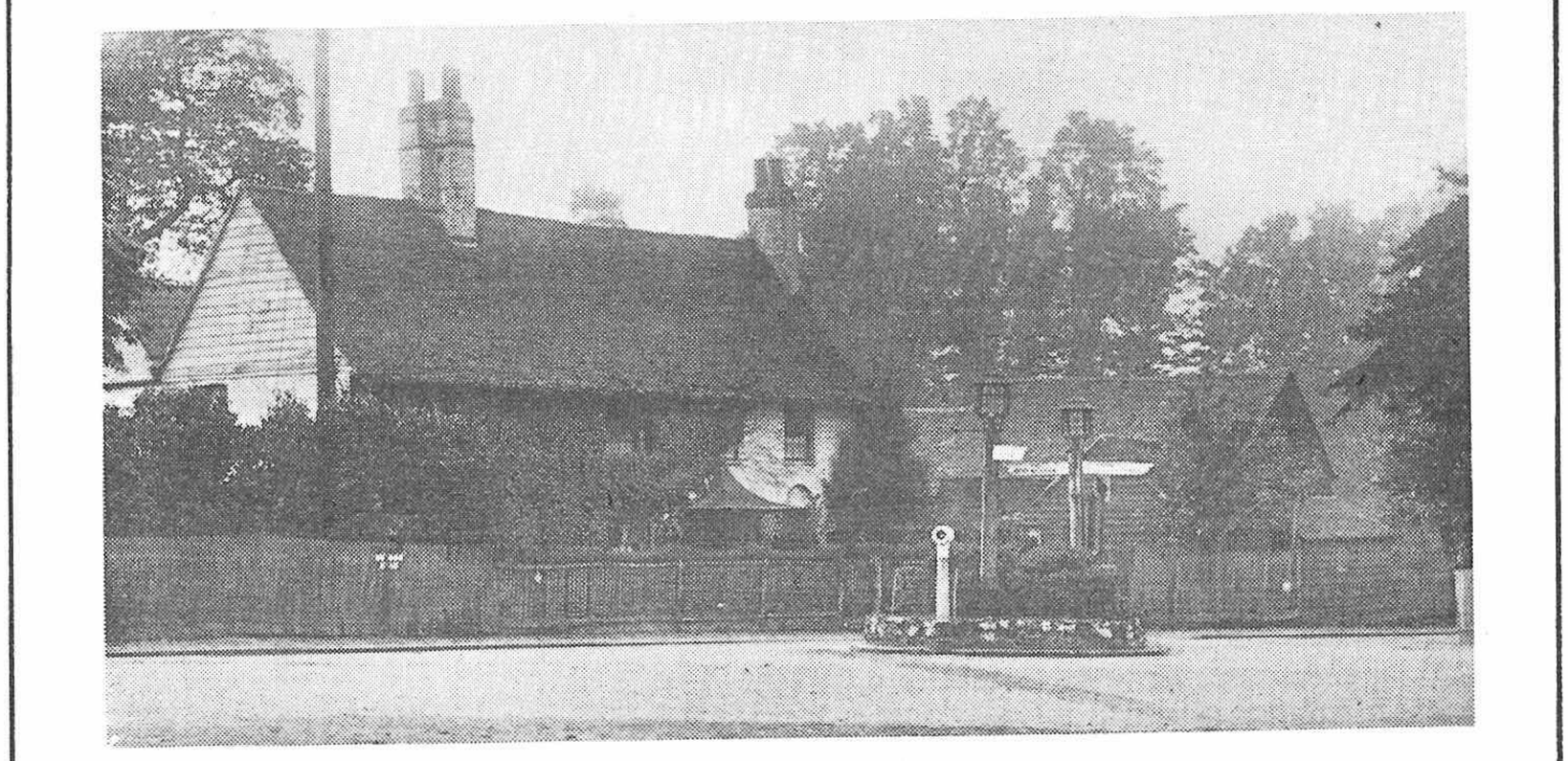
The Old Manor House, 1870



Foxgrove Farm



Clock House 1791



Stone Farm, Wickham Road

CHANGES in the DEVELOPMENT of LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

There are six major changes in the development of Local Government from the days of the Overseers and the Vestry, to those of a Borough. Prior to the Public Health Act of 1872 the parish affairs in Beckenham were administered by the Common Law Vestry but with the passing of this Act the Rural Sanitary Authority was formed in Beckenham and held its meetings in the building on the corner of Kelsey Square, in the centre of the High Street.

Next came the Parochial Committee in 1874. Three years later the Village was divided into five Wards - Langley Park, Copers Cope, Manor House, Eden Park and Laurie Park. This Committee only existed for four years for in 1878 the Local Board was formed, still holding its meetings in the same building. When No. 7, Kelsey Square was being redecorated in 1961, and it was necessary to strip off about five layers of wallpaper from the passage wall, a painted panel was discovered giving details of the Offices and Officers of the Board who attended there. This writing was in remarkably good preservation.

In 1882 the Local Board moved to the Old Manor House, opposite the Parish Church, in Bromley Road. With the passing of the Local Government Act of 1894 the Local Board was replaced by the Beckenham Urban District Council and the Village further divided by the addition of two more Wards, Kent House and Shortlands.

As the years went on and the Village grew local administrative work also grew, with the result that most of the Council Departments out-grew their limited accommodation within the Council Offices. The Education Office moved to 14, Bromley Road; the Public Health Office to the building on the corner of Burnhill Road and High Street; the Surveyor's Department to a shop on Church Hill, while the Electricity Showrooms, then part of the Council's administration, were on the corner of Manor Road and Church Hill.

A new Town Hall was obviously urgently needed. But where could a suitable site be found? With the development of the Rectory Estate in 1925 it soon became evident that land in the centre of the town was rapidly being taken up for house building and the Council, after very protracted negotiations, decided to purchase the Old Rectory as a site for the new Town Hall. But, at what a price!

The foundation stone of the new Town Hall was laid on 20th. March 1931, and on a wet, memorable day, 20th. October 1932 the opening ceremony was performed by the then H.R.H. The Prince George, Duke of Kent.

When the Old Rectory was demolished a foundation stone was discovered, bearing this inscription:-

THIS STONE WAS LAID JULY 9th. 1789 by JOSEPH ROSE,

Son of Rev. Wm. ROSE, RECTOR OF THIS PARISH.

This stone has been built into a wall inside the entrance to the Town Hall in The Crescent, but because this entrance is not now used very few people know of the existence of this most interesting link with the past. Two of the Adam fireplaces were saved and used in Committee Rooms where bronze plaques record their former history. At the time of this publication these fireplaces are boarded up as the rooms are used as offices of the Borough Engineer's Department.

But Beckenham was not yet a Borough. The negotiations for a Charter were long and tedious. Records show that as far back as 1904 the Council had suggested taking such a step. At one time it was feared that Beckenham might be swallowed up by the L.C.C. before Borough Status was attained. A Public Meeting was called in 1927 at which Coun: Dr. J. H. Bennett (later our First Substitute Charter Mayor) stressed the urgency of the matter.

After the Town Hall was opened, the final steps were taken in October 1933 when the Council held a special meeting and signed a Petition for the Grant of a Charter of Incorporation under Section 210 of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1882. There was yet, however, a further step to take.

With the general development of West Wickham the question of absorption either with Bromley or Beckenham arose. However, on 1st. April 1934 West Wickham was added to Beckenham when a tapecutting ceremony performed by Coun: F. Healy, Chairman of the B.U.D.C., increased the population by about 10,000 and the Rateable Value by nearly £120,000.

The Charter was granted on 22nd. August 1935 and on 26th. September of that year Sir Stephen Killick, then Lord Mayor of London, came to Beckenham with the Mayoral Coach and Mace to present the Charter to our Charter Mayor, Sir Josiah Stamp, G.C.B., G.B.E. The first meeting of the Beckenham Borough Council was held, by order, at noon on 9th. November 1935.

Under the Charter the Borough was divided into eight Wards, each Ward electing three Councillors. These wards were Lawrie Park, Kent House, Copers Cope, Manor House, Eden Park, Shortlands, Langley Park and West Wickham; but in 1951 the Wards were revised to:- Lawrie Park & Kent House, Copers Cope, Clock House, Manor House, Eden Park, Shortlands and West Wickham North and South.

LETTERS AND MEMOIRS.

Letter from Sarah Hedger to H. R. Copeland (1962)

"My parents and us children first came to Beckenham in 1887 to live in Langley Park as Sir George Chambers, to whom my father was gardener, had taken up residence at Langley Lodge which was a one-storey house with four pillars in front. We lived over the stables adjoining in four nice rooms, and in the kitchen were round windows.

Langley Lodge was situated at the far end of the Park, more towards Shortlands. The road in the Park was very rough, and when we reached the end of the Park we came to Hayes Lane, near where the Parklangley Garage is now. When the weather was very cold we would call at a small house in Wickham Road, near Hayes Lane, for some 'brandy balls'. This was the house of the 'Queen of West Wickham'; she wore a flowered full-skirted dress, and carried a parasol and a book. It was her mother who kept the sweet shop.

There were only a few houses on the left hand side of Wickham Road (going towards the Village) among them being the Lodge at the entrance to Kelsey Park; also Mr. Barnard's, the dairyman's house, Kelsey Park Farm. Near the corner of Chancery Lane was a Coffee Tavern where we could get a large square, thick, cake for a 1d.

I think the Wesleyan Church was near completion in 1887, as I remember the Builders were busy on a large building nearly opposite Bromley Road School. I left school in 1891; Mr. Obee was the Caretaker. What a nice lot of teachers we had; the Misses Blackall, Buddlecombe, Clarke, Kessle, Davis, Bailey and Palmer.

Sometimes we would go a different way home, going down by the Police Station, crossing over to Kelsey Park Road, which was then a field with a path way called Love Lane; this brought us into Wickham Road, just above Chancery Lane.

Langley Park was a lovely place; one entrance led to Eden Park, another to West Wickham and Beckenham. There was a place called Pyko, leading to Shortlands; it was a rough field with a low hedge which we could climb over at the far end of Hayes Lane. A favourite walk was by the lake leading to Mr. Goodhart's estate, and a lovely avenue of trees.

1887, being the Jubilee Reign of Queen Victoria, all the children at the schools were given an outing to the Crystal Palace. 1891, my last year at school, was when the Croydon Recreation Ground was opened, and as I was one of the older girls I, with others, led the procession of girls from the school down the Village to the grounds, carrying flags.

We were only at Langley Park for just over five years; but what happy years!"

Sarah Hedger.

Extracts from a letter from Alderman John Bennett to Frank Thornton relating to the Beckenham Flood of 1878.

"In April 1878 the local flood took place, and what a day it was; about 12 o'clock the water was level with the top of the counter and I was busy rescuing the little blocks of wood that were wrapped up to represent 5 quires of paper, from floating out of the shop door, and down the High Street.

There was a wedding due to take place and Mr. Wilson (then proprietor of the Stationer's Shop) and his sister and guests had to get out of the back window over some planks to Graham's Yard at the foot of Church Hill, which was above the water level, in order to get to the wedding.

The Pent-Stocks at the Old Manor House were open and about mid-day the water began to subside; Mr.Ferris' pony was nearly drowned in the stable at the back. Mr.Wilson did not recover from the effects of the flood".

J. A. B.

FACTS and FIGURES

JACK CADE, rebel leader of the Kentish insurgents who, with 20,000 men, marched on London in 1450, is referred to in a book "Illustrations of Jack Cade's Rebellion" by B. B. Orridge, F.G.S. and W. D. Cooper F.S.A. (1869). It is recorded that "the following Beckenham men were concerned in the Rebellion:- Robertus Payne, Husbandman; Rictus Nether, Henry Payn and Thomas Thornton, Yeomen".

\- - -

In a former History of Beckenham it was stated that "Beckenham had the honour of assisting to make the 'Kateryn Pleasuance', the ship which carried Henry VIII to Calais for the Field of the Cloth of Gold. No doubt Henry Kynge, of Beckenham, felt proud at receiving for carrying 'one piece of the Keel from Wekham in two carts - 2s. 8d.; the other part and the stem piece - 4s. Od.; two great crooked pieces, being two loads 4s. Od.' ".

\- - -

In a survey taken by order of the Parliament in 1650 it appears that a Chief Rent of Six Shillings, called "Lathe" and 'Tythe Silver", was payable by the Township of Beckenham to the Crown.

\- - -

In 1662 there was a Hearth Tax and records reveal that the Rector was charged for 9 hearths; Richard King at the Sign of ye George for 7; Brograve of Kelsey for 15; and Langley for 24. In all 52 persons were charged for 181 hearths, and 40 persons were non-chargeable as not possessing more than one hearth. There were probably less than 100 houses in the Village at that time.

\- - -

There is an interesting reference to Elmers End in an Indenture dated 10th. February 1682 between John Sumpner, of Lambeth and Hugh Surrey relating to "house, buildings, grounds and lands known as 'Eastfield' situated at Elmers End, occupied by Stephen Randell and Thomas Fanster."

\- - -

The Churchwarden's Accounts for 1686 throw some light on the prices of labour and materials during that period:- "To one day's work on the South side of the Church by Mr. Tanner and his son - 3s. Od. 2,000 roof tiles and 500 bricks - 48s. Od."

\- - -

The housing of the poor was evidently a subject which excercised the inhabitants of Beckenham as far back as 1775. After mentioning the great want for small houses for the 'industrious shepherds and labourers of the Parish' it was decided to ask John Cator, the Lord of the Manor, to build twelve houses - "four on the waste at Elmors End Green, four at Upper Elmors End Green and four on the waste lying on the side of the road going to Penge". (Some of these are thought to have been the old cottages not far from the 'Rising Sun' which were demolished in 1962 for new Council Flats.)

\- - -

A writer of about 1825 speaks of Beckenham as containing:- "Two of three old farm houses, a number of irregularly-built dwellings, two Inns (probably The George and The Three Tuns), a Cage and the Pound".

- - -

At a Vestry meeting in 1834 a resolution was passed, turning down a fresh application for a Public House Licence, "that beer shops are a nuisance in the Parish, that they are baneful to the labouring poor, pernicious to their families, and injurious to the community; that there are already five Beer Shops and two Public Houses".

- - -

The Window Tax was abolished in 1851.

- - -

At another Vestry Meeting, in 1869, a resolution was passed:- "As it is difficult to keep so old and thickly filled a Churchyard in order by hand, that sheep be admitted for the purpose".

- - -

Two Court cases make interesting reading to-day:-

On 6th August 1877 Mr. D. S. was charged before C. Lea Wilson, Esq: at the Beckenham Police Station with stealing one pair of paper-hanger's shears, valued at 1s.6d.

In July 1881 two men were summoned for stealing a quantity of growing Tares, value 3d., at Elmers End. A Policeman saw the defendants in a field adjoining the top end of Langley Road, pulling up the tares and putting them in a basket. Fines of 5s.Od and costs of 6s.Od were paid.

- - -

Advertisement in the Beckenham Journal of September 1880:-

Two rooms (unfurnished) To Let, in one of the most pleasant parts of Beckenham. Rent 7s. in advance. Suitable for a married City Gentleman, or other respectable and quiet person.

- - -

The Local Guide of 1889 reveals some startling information:-

The Chief Post Office at 2, Albemarle Road, had despatches at 9.35 a.m. 11.00 a.m. 1.25 p.m. 3.10 p.m. 5.0 p.m. 7.45 p.m. 9.30 p.m. & 10.30 p.m.; also Sunday at 7.20 p.m.; with Deliveries at 7.30 a.m. 12.10 p.m. 3.10 p.m. and 7.00 p.m.; and Sunday at 7.30 a.m.

- - -

In an advertisement of the same issue Mr. H. J. Longhurst of 4, Kelsey Park Road, announced the following prices:- Good Port Wine 24/- per dozen and Superior Old Wine 36/-. Champagnes 38/- per dozen and 1880 48/-. Sherries from 18/- to 30/- per dozen. French Brandy 3/- per bottle. London Gin 2/-, Scotch Whiskey 2/6 and 3/6 per bottle; with Bass Indian Pale Ale at 3/10d. for a crate of three dozen bottles.

- - -

LOCAL ROAD AND PLACE NAMES.

The study of road and place names in any district often gives an interesting side light on local history. After reading the brief outline of local history in this edition many connections with the past will be seen in the following origin of such names.

Leaving aside the directional road names such as Croydon and Bromley Roads, those associated with churches, such as St. George's Road and St. Mary's Avenue, and those describing some physical feature such as The Knoll - a rising ground - Crescent Road and Park Road, a large number are of particular interest.

Starting with roads associated with well-known buildings we have CLOCK HOUSE ROAD from the former building in Beckenham Road; CEDARS ROAD which got its name from the trees in Beckenham Lodge; WELLHOUSE ROAD, by Crease Park, was so named because of the old Well House of Eden Farm nearby; SIDNEY ROAD, from Sidney Cottage in Beckenham Road; and roads near to our local streams, CHAFFINCH ROAD, RAVENSBOURNE AVENUE, BROOK PLACE, near The Greyhound; FAIRFIELD ROAD, which got its name from the field off Burnhill Road where an annual Fair was held; and CHURCHFIELDS ROAD from the Church Fields in the former ARTHUR ROAD.

It is conjectured that CHANCERY LANE, which runs between Bromley and Wickham Roads, got its name from land held by an order of the Court of Chancery. In 1674 land in the neighbourhood of lower Oakwood Avenue (then CLAY HILL) known as Cowlees Field, together with other adjoining land was presented to the Beckenham Parochial Charities. Cowlees Field was the site of an old Workhouse, on the present site of Nos. 118 & 120, Bromley Road, a two-storey building with two attic bedrooms, let on lease in 1836. In 1854 the property was transferred from the Parish to Official Trustees of Charity Land by an order of the Court of Chancery. The old Workhouse was pulled down in 1858.

Some of our roads have been planted with special trees, so we have LIMES ROAD, CHERRY TREE WALK and BIRCHWOOD AVENUE.

A large number of our local roads are named in connection with the particular Manor Houses and the families who resided there. The Cator family came to Beckenham in the 18th. century and built BECKENHAM PLACE and soon became the leading landowners in the district. The Cator Estate covered practically the whole of the land on the north side of the main road from Shortlands to New Beckenham, and a considerable part beyond the High Street to Penge. ALBEMARLE CATOR was one of the sons, and LENNARD was also associated with that family.

The present seat of the Cator family is at WOODBASTWICK, in Norfolk. These family names have been remembered in our road names as, of course, has CATOR itself. BLAKENEY and MONIVEA have associations with Ireland. Albemarle Cator married Elizabeth BLAKENEY of MONIVEA, Ireland, in 1834.

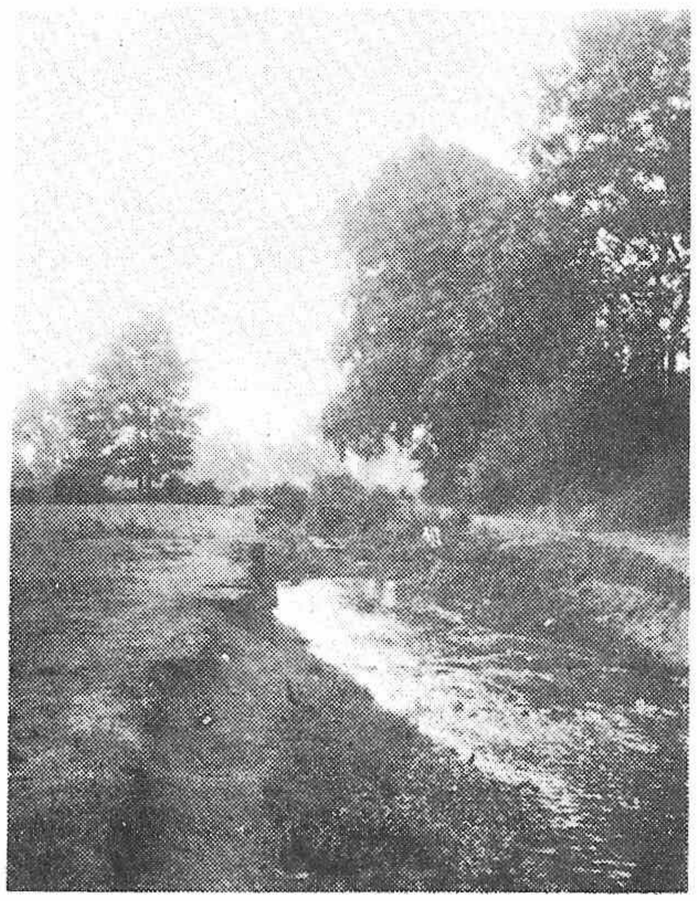
The three large farms of FOXGROVE, COPERS COPE and KENT HOUSE have present road names, and between the two latter farms were fields and meadows with the names of REDDONS, ALDERSMEAD, BARNMEAD, PLAWSFIELD, LAWN, BRACKLEY and WORSLEY which have now given us a lasting link in roads with these names. Other roads on the north side of Beckenham Road are named after farms in that area; THAYERS FARM, ELM FARM, ROWDEN and CHAFFINCH.

Beckenham Place was once described as situated on Stumps Hill, and to-day we have STUMPS HILL LANE, which runs off the Southend Road into Worsley Bridge Road, and WESTGATE ROAD was the west drive entrance to Beckenham Place Park.

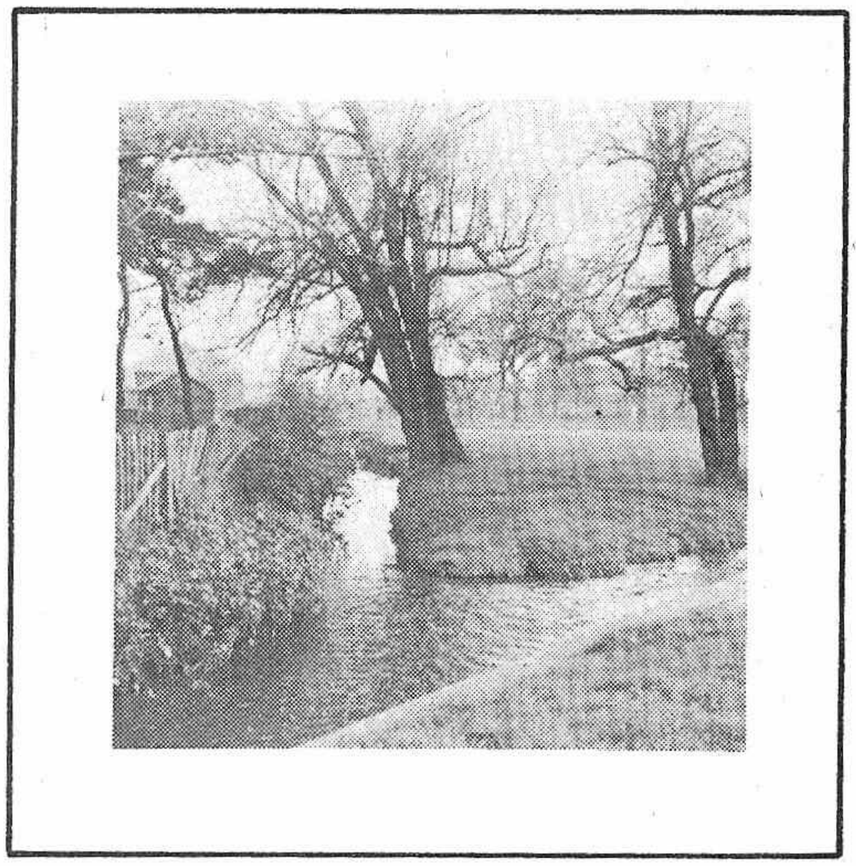
Kelsey Manor estate dates back to the beginning of the 15th century and the Brograve family. A recent cul-de-sac off Wickham Road has been named BROGRAVE GARDENS. Many roads on this estate are very familiar:- KELSEY PARK ROAD, KELSEY PARK AVENUE, KELSEY WAY, KELSEY SQUARE, MANOR WAY, BURRELL ROW (at the bottom of the High Street) with MANOR VIEW just round the corner from where, at one time, there was a clear view of Kelsey Manor. PARK FARM COURT, at the top end of Wickham Road, stands on the site of the former Kelsey Park Farm.

Along the Croydon Road there were farm fields belonging to Peter Burrell in 1762 named GREAT GROVELAND and BROOM FIELD, while further back in 1685 there were farm fields named ALLEN, GREENWAYS, THE MEAD and MEADWAY, and although these are words in common use, our local roads with these names are possibly named after these fields. There was an ABBOTS FARM shown on maps of the 16th. century.

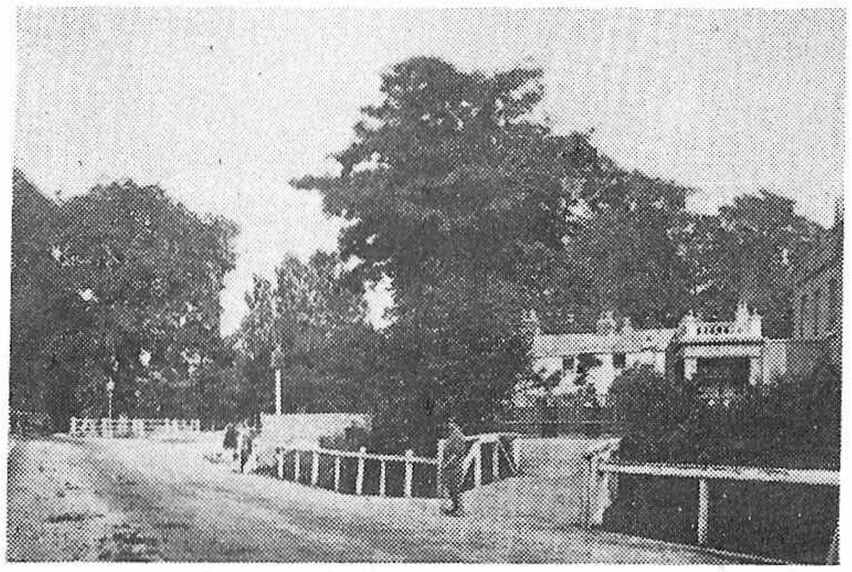
This would be an appropriate place to mention MONKS ORCHARD (M.O.B. p.17) and HOLLY LODGE which was part of that estate. The Loyd family were the original owners of Monks Orchard, and I think that LLOYDS WAY was named after them, although the spelling is different. At the back of Holly Lodge we have HOLLY CRESCENT and LODGE GARDENS (off Eden Way). STANHOPE was a family related to the Edens and Pitts. (M.O.B. p.13)



The Chaffinch
at
Clock House
1900

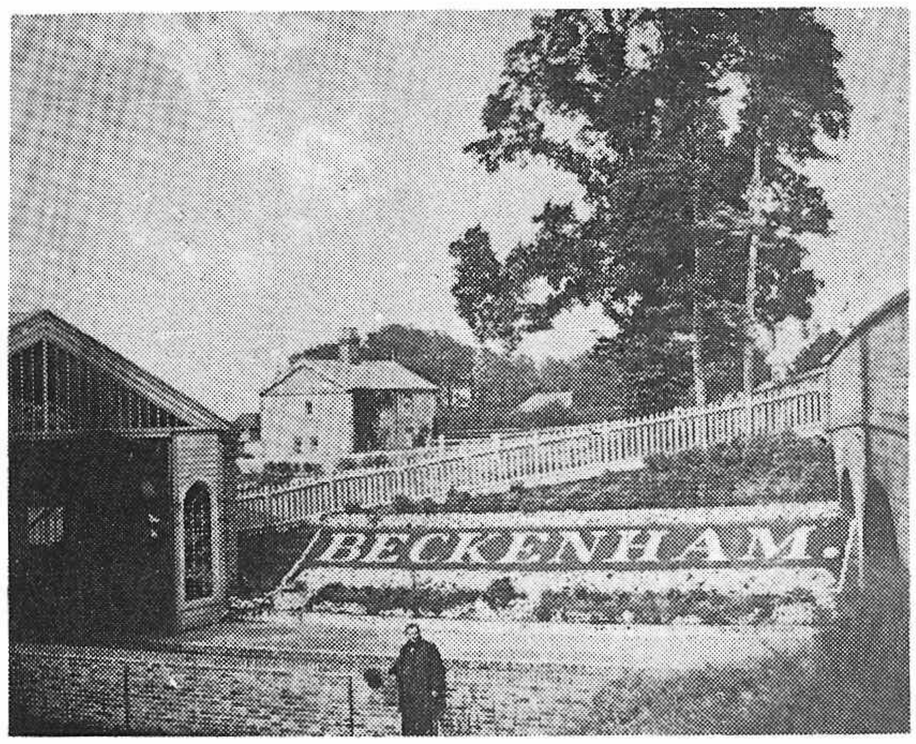


The Beck
joins
The Chaffinch
in Cator Park

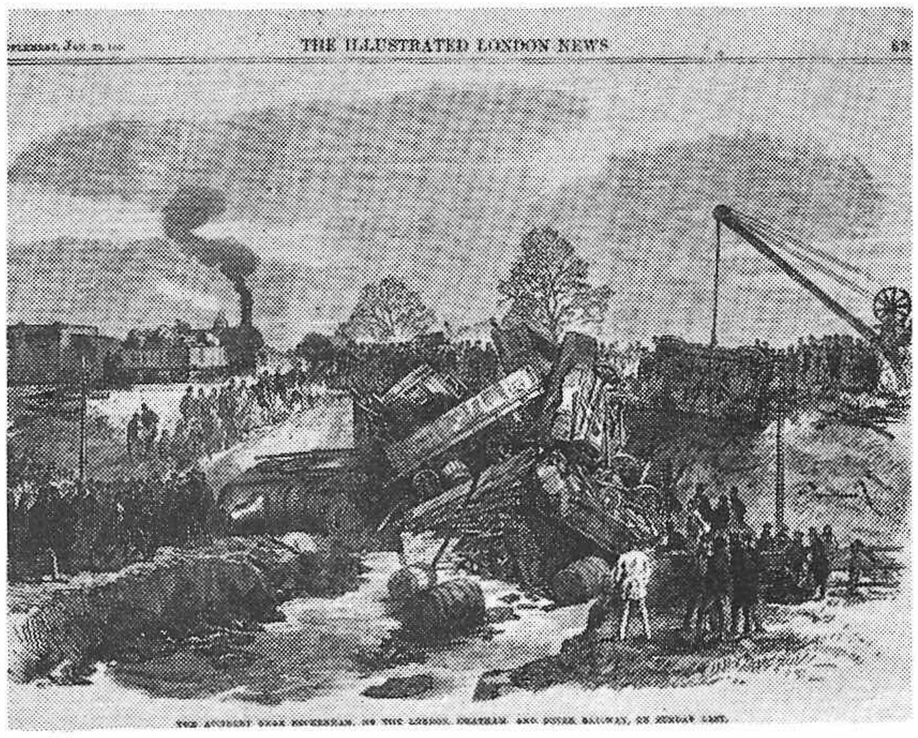


The Greyhound 1870

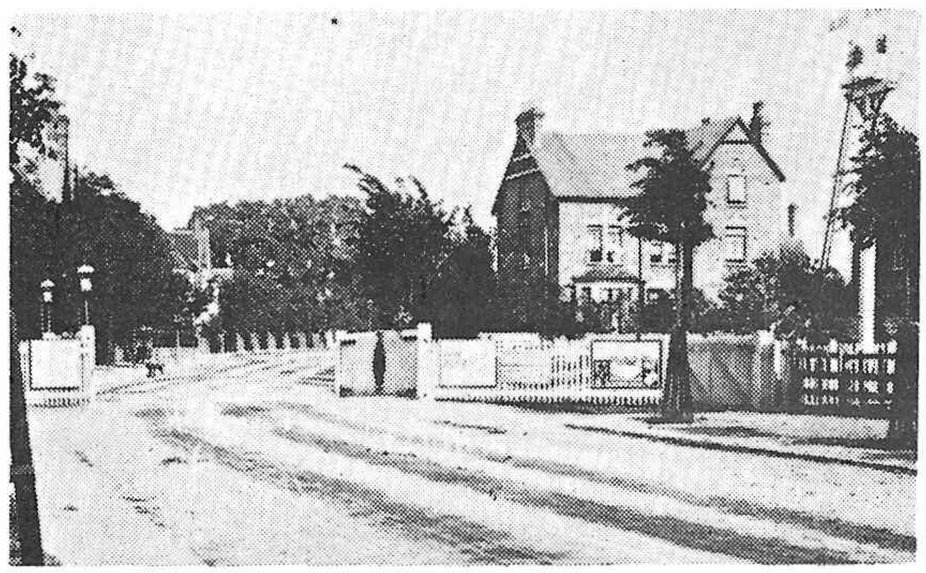
The Beck enters the High Street



Beckenham Junction 1860s



Railway Accident 1866



Level Crossing at New Beckenham

Original Station at New Beckenham

Eden Park mansion stood on the present site of CREASE PARK, named after Alderman J. Crease, our Second Substitute Charter Mayor. We have not many road names associated with this property except, of course, EDEN ROAD, EDEN PARK AVENUE, WELLHOUSE ROAD and STANHOPE GROVE. Nearby is WHITMORE ROAD, the road from Croydon Road leading to Whitmore's house in Kelsey Lane, now known as 'Beau Lodge'.

Parklangley has several roads named after former occupiers of Langley. STYLE(S) WAY, after the Style family of the 16th century; ELWILL WAY - Sir John Elwill married Elizabeth Style; and on the border, GOODHART WAY.

On a map as recent as 1890 there appeared a field named "Bushey Ten-Acres" through which now runs BUSHEY WAY. STONE PARK AVENUE was named after Stone Farm. Old maps of Shortlands show Kings Wood and Toots Wood. Just off KINGSWOOD ROAD were traces of a Roman Camp, shown on maps as recent as 1890. The house was called 'Romanhurst' and to-day we have in that neighbourhood KINGSWOOD ROAD and AVENUE, ROMANHURST GARDENS, CELTIC AVENUE, DRUIDS WAY, HENGIST WAY and TOOTSWOOD ROAD, all with Roman associations.

None of the residents at Shortlands seem to have been remembered in any road names. Oakwood House at one time belonged to a Dr. Scott, of Bromley; SCOTTS LANE, therefore, was the lane leading to the doctor's house.

At Village Place in the High Street, after Richard Lea, Col. Samuel Wilson took possession. LEA ROAD is off Fairfield Road, and VILLAGE WAY was once just a lane leading to Village Place. The Old Manor House in Bromley Road only gave us MANOR ROAD and GROVE, COURT DOWNS ROAD, DOWNS ROAD, and BEVINGTON ROAD, named after Col. Bevington who once resided at the Manor House.

Occupiers of the former Elmer Lodge, now in Dunbar Avenue, were Raymond (of Langley), Adams and Goddard, and their names have been remembered on the Municipal Housing Estate at Elmers End. And at Elmers End, in addition to Eden and Langley Roads we have GWYDOR ROAD, near Elmers End Station. This may well be a mis-spelling of Gwydir.

ANCASTER ROAD derived from the fact that a daughter of the Duke of Ancaster married Lord Gwydir, of Langley; and a daughter of Lord Perth married the second Lord Gwydir; PERTH ROAD is off Oakwood Avenue. Incidentally DUNBAR AVENUE, HAMPDEN ROAD and AVENUE are said to have associations with CROMWELL, while KIMBERLEY and MACKENZIE ROADS have associations with the Boer War.

CRAMPTON ROAD, which is partly in the old Beckenham area, has associations with the building of the Penge Tunnel, while on the Birkbeck Estate people associated with the Land Society leave their names innsuch roads as RAVENSCROFT ROAD, BIRKBECK ROAD, SULTAN STREET, ARROL, BLANDFORD, CLEMENT, SEWARD and VILLIERS ROADS.

So we come a little nearer the present era. FORSTER ROAD was named after our local M.P. in 1892, Mr. Forster representing the Sevenoaks Division of which Beckenham was then a part. He lived at Southend, Catford. When the Shortlands Housing Estate was developed after the first World War Councillor Dykes was Chairman of the Housing Committee and his name was used for DYKES WAY on that estate. C. A. Elgood was Chairman of the Local Education Committee and gave his name to the ELGOOD PLAYING FIELD, in Manor Way, the site of the present Kelsey Park School. Also on the Education Committee were Miss MARIAN VIAN and Rev. R. STEWART FLEMING whose names have been given to two of our local schools.

Many of the recent blocks of Council Flats and Houses have been given names of local celebrities, including former Mayors and Aldermen of Beckenham, and members of the N.F.S. who died while on Active Service. And in Langley Road we have STADDON CLOSE (C.Eric Staddon was our former Town Clerk, and Mrs.S.Staddon is a J.P.); while off Greenways, where a new road has been formed, we have THORNTON DENE, the Thornton family having many associations with Beckenham Past and Present.

Another block of Council Flats in Upper Elmers End Road has names of some of the former Lords of the Manor:- BOLINBROKE and le BRUN: BRANDRAM (Rector in 1838) CADE (The Village Schoolmaster of 1750) and BERNEY (whose daughter married a Style in the 16th century).

And still the process goes on. With the rapid development of Courts and Closes new names appear, almost without notice!

THE GROWTH OF POPULATION and RATEABLE VALUES IN BECKENHAM

YEAR	POPULATION		RATEABLE VALUE
Domesday Book	30		Only £9
1538	500		
1821	1,180		Total collected £300
1839	1,288		
1861	2,391		
1871	6,090		£69,000
1881	13,011		
1891	20,707		
1898			£213,278
1901	26,331		£239,617
1908			£268,965
1911	31,692		
1921	33,345		
1925			£285,450
1931	43,832		£479,290
1933	50,120		£536,868
1934	51,823	(1st.April)	
	10,080	(West Wickham added)	
	61,903		£653,408
1935	66,370		£716,208
1939	71,500		£845,229
1949	75,630		£856,023
1951	74,834		£881,675
1954		after Re-Valuation	£909,643
1961	77,265		£1,502,987

SUMMARY OF INTERESTING DATES IN THE HISTORY OF OLD BECKENHAM

1830 Foxgrove Manor demolished and re-built.

1851 Window Tax abolished.

1856 'The Cage' on Church Hill demolished.

1862 Henry Copeland came to Beckenham
Street Lighting introduced as a Private Enterprise
Kelsey Manor Lodges (Cottages) built

1867 National School for Children opened at Shortlands Church
Ancient Order of Foresters (The Court of St.George) established.

1871 Beckenham Industrial Co-operative Society, Ltd. formed.

1872 Beckenham Cottage Hospital opened (8 beds).

1873 Rev. F.C.S. Chalmers (Rector) resigned

1874 Home of Compassion (108/110 Bromley Road) built.

1876 Beckenham Charitable Society formed
Miss Wood - first Kindergarten Teacher (1st Class) in England
First Publication of Beckenham Journal.

1877 Old Beckenham Mission (Bromley Road) built.

1878 Foxgrove Farm buildings demolished.

1881 Anthony Rawlin's Almshouses restored and enlarged

1882 First Meeting of Beckenham Local Board
West Wickham Railway Station opened

1883 Public Hall, Bromley Road, built
Toll Gate - Kent House Road - demolished
Last occasion of 'Beating the Bounds' 17th May.

1884 New Police Station built on Church Hill (Opened by C.Lea Wilson,Esq.)

1885 Trees on Church Hill removed for development
'The Pound' - foot of Church Hill - removed
First Edition of T.W.Thornton's 'Beckenham Directory'.

1890 Beckenham Junction Station re-built
Bertie Almshouses 31/33, Bromley Road, built
House in Wickham Road (from 44 upwards) built.

1891 Croydon Road and Alexander Recreation Grounds opened.
Houses in Wickham Road, 48 etc. built.

1892 Catford Loop Line developed.

1894 Beckenham Urban District Council formed
Houses in Oakwood Avenue started.

1896 'Love Lane' (Burnhill Road to Wickham Road) closed
'Clock House' demolished.

1899 Toll Gate - Hardings Lane - demolished

1900 Electric Lighting inaugurated
G.P.O. built in Albemarle Road.
Further development of houses in Oakwood Avenue
'Elm Cottage' (High Street) used for Volunteer Corps.

1901 Beckenham Road Baths opened

1903 Parish Church Tower completed.

1904 New Beckenham Station built

1905 St.Hilda's Home (Crescent Road) built
First "Aerial Post"

1906 Churchfields Recreation Ground opened

1910 Parklangley Golf Club formed
Houses built in Queen's Road. (£450 each!!)
Houses in Manor Way started.

1913 Langley Mansion burnt down

1914 'The Pavilion' Cinema in High Street opened

1919 Girls County School in Lennard Road opened

1920 'Village Place' in High Street demolished
Elmers End Housing Estate built.

1921 'Kelsey Mansion' demolished
'Langley Court' taken over by Wellcome Foundation Laboratories

1924 Houses in Bromley Road (Nos.144 - 184) built

1925 Houses in The Drive (down to the stream) built

1926 Completion of houses in The Drive and Church Avenue
Town Hall site purchased
'Gaze-Bo' removed from Church Hill to Mr. Thornton's garden
Further development of Elmers End Estate and Upper Elmers End Road
Shortlands Housing Estate developed

1927 Old Rectory demolished for erection of Town Hall

Girls' County School enlarged

Shops in High Street (old Nos.106 etc.) demolished

Houses at top end of St. James's Avenue built

1928 Beckenham Place Park purchased by the L.C.C.

Houses in Bromley Road (Nos.51-65) built

Houses in Scotts Lane built

1929 Parklangley Garage built

1930 'The Regal' Cinema opened

Block of shops - Woolworth's etc. built

Also Shops at College Parade, Elmers End, and Croydon Parade.

Beckenham Heights Estate developed

1931 Work started on Town Hall

Beckenham and Penge Grammar School for Boys built

1932 Town Hall opened by H.R.H. The Duke of Kent.

1933 St. John's Church, Eden Park, built

Development of The Mead, Beckenham, Downsbridge Road and Coney Hall Estate

1934 Further development of Coney Hall Estate

Beckenham Place Public Golf Course opened

1935 END OF BECKENHAM VILLAGE & URBAN DISTRICT

Beckenham became a Borough - Charter presented 26th September

1936 Crystal Palace destroyed by fire.

1937 Old Beckenham Mission (Bromley Road) converted into Flats

1938 Beckenham Road Baths enlarged.

1939 Beckenham Central Library opened.

'Odeon' Cinema opened at Elmers End. (Demolished 1964)

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